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Park Avenue (by kind permission of Mrs. Mennell), the Rev. Dr. Fry, Headmaster of Berkhamsted School, will lecture on "The Duties of Parents to Schools."

REIGATE.—On Jan. 7th, "Birds at Home and Abroad," was the title of a lecture given by Mr. F. E. Lemon, M.A., LL.B., at the Reigate Grammar School. The chair was occupied by Mr. Henry Sewill. Speaking of the manner in which nature study cultivated the faculty of observation, the lecturer quoted from Ruskin, who defined the difference between an educated and an uneducated man thus: One would see correctly, and describe correctly; and the other saw incorrectly and described in exactly. Dealing with the main subject of his lecture, Mr. Lemon said that, as the natural protectors of vegetation from the attacks of countless insects, the utility of birds to mankind was beyond estimate. Speaking of the wonderful variety of our feathered friends, the lecturer declared that in Great Britain 400 species had been noted, and in the whole world, there were so many as 12,000 known species, and in describing the numerous and curious habits of the birds that are more familiar to us, and the variety of ways in which they are helpful to mankind, he kept his hearers amused and interested. Many fine species of birds had been exterminated from the British Isles by the fiend who went under the designation of collector, while a very great enemy to the bird was woman's vanity. The lecture was beautifully illustrated with a capital series of lantern slides thrown on the screen by Mr. Percival Padwick.

RICHMOND.—The December lecture of this branch was delivered at the County School, Richmond, by the Rev. Theodore Wood, F.E.S., to a crowded and deeply interested audience, largely composed of the young people for whom it was chiefly intended. The subject was "A Country Walk," which proved to be a most fascinating one, to which beast, bird, and insect contributed its quota of instruction and entertainment—the squirrel with its tail for balancing pole, its sharp, ever-renewing teeth, and its penetrating claws; the prickly hedgehog, whom sleep disarms; the weasel and the ferret; the greedy, quarrelsome robin, the thrush, the cuckoo, the kestrel, and the owl, the grave-digging beetle, the destructive green fly, and the beneficent ladybird were some of these. Mr. Wood's beautiful blackboard drawings in illustration of his subject as ever delighted his audience.

SIDCUP.—On Dec. 9th, an interesting paper was read in the afternoon by Mrs. Ennis Richmond on "Discipline." Mrs. Bristow, at whose house the meeting was held, took the chair.

WINCHESTER.—At a meeting held on Dec. 16th, in one of the College lecture rooms, Miss Patteson gave a lecture on the last sixteen years of the 16th century in Europe, illustrated by lantern slides, as an example of her method of teaching history and geography. After the lecture she explained the method fully. The lecture was lively and inspiring and the method seemed well calculated to stimulate interest and originality in children. Mrs. Nesbitt kindly gave tea after the meeting.

THE PARENTS' REVIEW

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF HOME-TRAINING AND CULTURE.

"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."

Vol. XVI. No. 3.]

[MARCH, 1905.]

ANOTHER SIDE OF THE UNIVERSITY QUESTION;

OR

SHALL WE SEND TOM TO THE UNIVERSITY? *

By O. H. HARDY.

THERE are other points in connection with the question of University education, which seem, at the present time, to need discussion, besides that of "Greek" or "no Greek." That particular issue is now *sub judice*, and no doubt will be thoroughly thrashed out before long. The principal aim of the "no Greek" party, as far as at present appears, is to make access to the Universities easier to many to whom, for scientific purposes, a course there would be most valuable. Whether there is, behind this, the desire, by abolishing any test in Greek, to make admission easier to many others besides, does not yet openly appear, but it has been more than hinted at in argument, and inference certainly points that way.

The object of this paper is to take another side of the question altogether, and to enquire, *from the parent's point of view*, whether, in a large number of cases, the cry for a University education is not a mere "follow-my-leader" cry, and one which a careful examination of the particular case may prove to be a delusive one, as leading to something of doubtful benefit to the boy whose future course is under consideration

*[Discussion on this important question is earnestly invited.—Ed.]

The boys as to whom the benefit of a University training admits of no doubt may be soon classified. They are:—

(1) The scholarly, and those in earnest about any particular line of study, for which the Universities give facilities.

(2) Those who aim at certain professions, such as the church or scholastic work.

Besides these there are two more classes as to whom, though the benefits are not so certain, the experiment is worth the time and money devoted to it:—

(3) Those of high social standing, whose friends are all there, and to whom, as chances of travel will occur later, it is at least as good a way of spending three years as any other that occurs to the mind.

(4) A large number from the leisured classes, who have no pressing responsibilities in life, but to whom a University course gives a chance of making friends, and coming under influences, that may direct and enrich their lives.

The cry however is largely raised by parents of other boys than these, parents who have not had a University training themselves, and whose boys have no qualities which mark them out for study, or for distinction in any particular line. Such parents often appear to think that some strange magic attaches to a University, some magic of cultivation, or class, or social standing, or manner, or aristocratic friends, or passing well with the world, and getting an *entrée*, where without its help there would be none.

If it really means any of these things it is perhaps a natural and excusable cry, even if nothing more, but what solid basis is there for it? Let us put aside for a moment the *accidents*—such as making friends, which, we shall see, deserves in many cases serious consideration—and take the effects of the training itself, on thoughts and habits of life, as well as on actual knowledge. Also, to be fair, we must take the case of the boy who has not gained a scholarship. If he has, he may fairly be classed under Class (1) above, and the leading is clear. Because:—

(a) He has shown an aptitude at books and perseverance in study.

(b) He enters at once as a man of some standing intellectually, and, other things being equal, he falls into an intelligent set, and is more marked by his tutors.

(c) More is expected of him in the "Schools" and he will be cared for, for the sake of the College itself.

If he has not gained a scholarship, and, assuming him to be the son of parents who cannot provide him an independence, to be in fact one of the large class who are in the future to help to form the common working currency of English life, the question needs more serious treatment than it generally obtains.

The boy we assume has grit in him. Most boys have, though it may take long to discover where it lies; but he has, by hypothesis, no great tradition to keep up, because we are taking the case of a boy who goes up, at his parents' expense, from a middle-class home, and from an undistinguished place in a public school, or perhaps only from a private school, to the University.

He finds himself free from restraint, surrounded by all sorts of attractions to social life with others—since like clings to like—not wiser or more experienced than he is himself. He probably joins the clubs or societies frequented by those who happen to lead the freshmen of the particular term. He makes his choice between rowing, football, cricket, or the rifle corps, and whichever he joins becomes, naturally, a most important factor of his life. He attends lectures and looks forward to passing some examinations, in time—neither the work nor the object of it meaning much to him, nor tending to bring out his best.

His other terms are very much repetitions of the same thing; varied perhaps by an occasional touch to his "idealism," if he has any, by contact with some mind superior to the rest, or the example of some friend who is gravely in earnest. For the most part, however, he passes through untouched by the hand of culture, which, at the Universities, as elsewhere, is for her chosen ones, and, at the end, he has indeed, as his parents may perhaps think with pride, lived like a gentleman—whatever that may mean—for three or four years. He has perhaps taken a degree, and, therefore, has satisfied the examiners that he knows something of some subject, or group of subjects, which appeal to no antecedent inclination and lead to no firm grasp of principles, and which probably he will then and there begin to forget, even more rapidly than it was

learned. Where, however, is his equipment for the work—for the exacting work—of daily life, with its need of a force from *within* to grapple with life's best side, and make duty an end and ultimately a success?

It is too readily assumed by parents that culture is lying about at the Universities ready to hand, and that a boy cannot come away without some smattering of it. It is no such thing. The conditions of life are the same there as elsewhere. "To him that hath shall be given." The numbers of the cultured, and the opportunities for culture, are no doubt proportionately greater there than in London or any provincial town where a young man learning his life's business is likely to be placed, but the temptations to *dolce far niente*—to a mere dissipation of serious objects are also greater.

If we hope for culture for him, what is it on which we base our hope? Is it lectures? Is it private reading? Is it social life with its various influences on the growing mind? Let us take them in order:—

(1) *Lectures*. Unless a young fellow is in earnest lectures count for nothing. He may go unprepared to them, and therefore come away unimpressed and unimproved. A college lecture on Virgil, or Euripides, or some branch of mathematics, or even on history, cannot be put in the same category as a striking popular lecture on astronomy or Arctic exploration or literary biography. From the latter we all come away with, at least, some new facts or ideas, or new setting of old facts or ideas to ponder over. But each one of a course of lectures, for those who merely seek an ordinary degree, is a continuation of the last, and cannot by any ingenuity or pains of the lecturer be made interesting to those who are not in earnest in preparation or interested in the subject. Lectures are no royal road—there is no royal road—to culture.

Even lectures for "honour men" are too frequently little better. Dean Stanley speaks strongly of "the contrast between the ordinary tutorial lecture of many colleges and the sixth form lessons at the best public schools." "We construed in the old way, word for word by turns, with one or two unimportant remarks from him, . . . a few commonplace observations from the lecturer, and remarkable ignorance from the men." The same was the experience of the writer

of this paper at a much later date, and the same in a large number of cases holds good still, and the conditions are much the same, whatever be the subject of the particular course. No doubt there are lectures of a totally different class, and where lecturer and listeners strike sparks out of one another as they go along, but these are not, and cannot be, those attended by the boys we are speaking of.

Dr. Arnold speaks of what lecturing was to him:—"My delight in going over Homer and Virgil with the boys makes me think what a treat it must be to teach Shakespeare to a good class of young Greeks in regenerate Athens, to dwell upon him, line by line, and word for word, in a way that nothing but a translation lesson ever will enable one to do, and so to get all his pictures and thoughts leisurely into one's mind, till I verily think one would after a time almost give out light in the dark, after having been steeped, as it were, in such an atmosphere of brilliance." He was, however, the "genius" of lecturing for all time, and was speaking of his sixth form, which has been ever since the *beau ideal* of the highest class of public school boys.

Lectures such as these *do* convey culture, but look at the difference. It is the common experience of a vast number that the descent from the intelligent atmosphere of a good sixth form classroom to the routine of lectures—even honour lectures—for the first year at a University is a steep one.

What "culture" may mean amongst the young fellows themselves comes more properly under the head of "social life," but this seems the place to introduce a personal experience. The writer, then a sixth form boy, well remembers the privilege of listening to the talk of half a dozen young "scholars" just entered on the life of an Oxford College in its palmy days. They were the pick of various public schools, a discussion arose which brought to bear their knowledge of and evident love for some of the niceties of the Greek poets, but it ranged wider. English poets were quoted from, both medieval and modern, the spirit of thought was as truly amongst those boys as with Coleridge at Roger's breakfast table. One even spoke of Thomas à Kempis—a few words that showed thought and the reverence for beautiful things. The boy in question, however, is not one of those boys, nor

is he, as will appear later, likely to mix with them. His good qualities, for we assume these, are of a different kind.

(2) *Private Reading.* Again, private reading does not mean culture. Its object is its measure. The mere passing of examinations, which do not lead on to an object, such as the entrance into a particular profession, and, too often, those that do, appeal to nothing in the growing powers of mind. This is even at its best, *i.e.*, when done alone. But generally "passmen" read by twos and threes, and earnestness gives way to banter, or talk of sport, or other matters of passing interest.

Amongst the class we are dealing with, the "standard" is not study or success in it. The kind of study exacted appeals to no special fitness and supplies no want. The "standard" is more probably "ease," and the desire to have a good time. Private reading then of this kind, at this stage, and in the case of this young man, even if it is study, is not worth spending three or four years of his life over.

(3) *Social Life.* The social life at a University is not culture. Social life is there, as everywhere else—life amongst one's equals. As a man thinks, lives and aims, so will he choose his friends, and, more still, so will his friends choose him. He may indeed make friends of some, who, if the friendship continues, may give him chances, later on, of a social life somewhat wider than his own surroundings at home. He may also make some friends, who, supposing him later to enter a profession, may be useful to him in it, though this is a mere speculation. This would be however only in the material usefulness of clients or introducers of such. If these chances seem to parents worth three or four years of the time when character is forming, as well as the large expense involved, let them send their boys on the hazard.

The boy however, for reasons already stated, is not likely to come into any terms of intimacy with the "salt" of the University—with those who could, by sheer mental or moral calibre, or later, by the aid which the really great can often give, influence his life.

It may be said however—and often is said—the boy may win his "blue." So much is made of this at present, that we must consider it seriously, if not as making for culture, at

least as an event and, in some points of view, an important one in a boy's life. It is often put thus:—"The healthy rivalry of games and athletics is good for him, and that, adding his 'blue' as a result, is worth all the years given to it, as a start in life."

A parent who argues thus would continue to do so, whatever might be said to the contrary, and, assuming the boy did win his "blue," he would very likely be right in many cases. The necessary discipline, at first the obedience, and later the habits of command, involved in the process, would be very valuable. It would necessarily mean, not only strength, or skill, or perseverance, but the filling responsible and active positions on the committees of various clubs on the way to the goal, with the tact and good fellowship thereby learned, and so would be a lesson in managing men.

But these cases are necessarily few, and can to a large extent, be gauged before a boy goes up. If, as by our hypothesis, the boy is an ordinary one, with no great signs of success in anything beforehand, to send him up on that score seems nothing but a venture against heavy odds.

It must be remembered that these precious years between eighteen and twenty-one are the years when the mind is forming habits, when it is apprehensive, quick to learn, apt to form indelible ideas.

What is the alternative then? What is a young fellow to do instead? Are these remarks simply aimed against a common practice, without suggesting anything to take its place? By no means. The boy has life before him, and, by the hypothesis, his living to make. What he wants is to be fitted for both. Put him at once either into the work he is to live by, or into something that will teach him thoughtful and methodical habits of work.

It is the commonest experience that the man who takes to a thing in boyhood does it the best, in business as well as in mechanical matters. He learns his work on all sides, while his mind is forming. It becomes part of himself, and, for the making of a man, especially a useful one, the thorough knowledge of one subject is infinitely better than a smattering of many, even supposing the smattering could be gained by an ordinary University course.

We are not dealing with the men of intellect, who sometimes pick up vast new subjects by a quasi-intuition, after having been educated on scholarly lines alone—we are dealing with your son "Tom." Let us at once get rid of the fallacy that a place of learning alone can give "education" or "cultivation." Nothing is more untrue.

What will your average boy do with his spare time if he goes straight to work from school? He will not, if you are wise, spend his whole life at his work. He has a home, friends—both at work and at play—evenings, holidays. He is doing the right thing—work, the law of life. He has the man's sense of doing his duty, and if he does it well, the instinct it gives of improving himself in other ways. The society of young fellows learning business or a profession is no whit less intelligent than the society of Tom's *peers* at a University, though they be not surrounded with books and tutors. They have common objects in which they *must* be interested. Moreover, all towns of any importance have not only libraries, but excellent lectures that stimulate thought. If he is unfit for business, that is another thing. In that case he is perhaps as badly off at home as at college, where he is unfit for learning, but no worse. Life, however, decrees that he *must* be fit for life's business, whereas life says nothing about *book-learning*.

But, though these outside interests are important, the real benefit is in the work itself, with the power of concentration it gives, a concentration which not only is the antithesis of the "dissipation" of powers, too often produced by college life on those who are not fitted for it, but which, in itself, is most formative of character.

Work that *must* be done and done with the steadfast view ahead that that particular work, in its various stages, leading on to complete mastery, is to be one's lot in life, is in itself so educative and so opens the possibilities of the mind, that we need not and ought not, at all events at this stage, to dwell much on collateral possibilities. Work persevered in till the act of mastering it becomes interesting, shows the mind its powers, and gives it the desire, and the capacity to learn and do other things. What is this but "character," a force from within, which gains power as it goes, and turns the mind in the direction which it finds most adapted to its

capacities? Where is the equivalent for this in the mere "degree-taking" at a University? During this stage a boy should even make the literature of his business his study, read books that place its higher and wider sides before him, learn of the lives of inventive and original business men—in fact, build up his mind on the foundation of the serious work of his life. The later effects of this we leave for the moment, but they are not far to seek to a thoughtful parent.

Meanwhile he need not miss his sports. Look at the healthy and active forms of young fellows in mercantile houses or lawyers' offices. Who more keen or successful at sport in their well-earned holidays and long summer evenings? At twenty-one they know something, they can do something. They have not to be broken in and to discard, with difficulty, epicurean habits and general slack ways, picked up while they were far too much their own masters at college. Many of us know that college ways in "Tom's" case do not conduce to method, to hard application, to what are at first irksome subjects—that long afternoons on the river or in the cricket field are not readily dropped, nor the work readily resumed after the luncheon hour.

Who is the best man at twenty-five? Then comes "Tom's" advantage. He knows his work and his habits are formed. He has gained, not only manliness, but intelligence from it. If he has wise parents, he has travelled a little in his holidays, and has read something better than the myriad magazines, which are, at least, as seductive at the Universities as elsewhere. He is now in a position to look round, and "culture" is a quality which readily lends itself to such as he has become. It is sad to say, but there are some University men who, for years after their course is finished, only talk about and hanker after the ways of the "Varsity" and men met there, and this is all that is sometimes left to them, if they have grappled none of the real benefits of a University to their souls. In any case it takes time with the boy, about whom we are writing, to throw it all off, and much time to learn hard work and drudgery.

Your boy, however, who has mastered himself, can master much more. He can learn, if need be, all the really useful things he could have learned at a University, but he can

do more and better than this. He knows what to learn to suit his character, and he knows too that patience can do anything. What advantage has a University man over this? Do the words "refinement" or "good form" still stand in the way? If they mean anything worth having, a boy from a good school with sensible parents, moderately intelligent friends, and the self-respect that comes from duty conscientiously done, has them, or could never acquire them, if they do not let them go.

It is indeed quite common to hear young fellows of intelligence, who cannot afford, or whose class in life has prevented them from obtaining, a University education wishing they could have it, and longing for the advantages others have. The thought of this may well make parents think whether they cannot give their own sons this advantage. We must however bear in mind:—

(1) That this class of young man probably has the instincts of culture, and would certainly do well and make the most of the real advantages of a University course.

(2) That it is quite possible that they over-rate the advantages of what they cannot get, and their eagerness for self-improvement will, whatever be their calling or mode of life, compel them to forge ahead and gain grit and character, and perhaps culture too, in their efforts, though they never go near a "seat of learning."

(3) That by our hypothesis "Tom" is not one of these, and they do not concern the argument.

Another point of view seems well worth consideration. If you can afford three or four years at a University you can afford a year's travel. Of course there are difficulties in the way of obtaining this in such a form as to be wholly useful and profitable. Companions, supervision, guidance, are necessary, and these are not always obtainable without considerable extra expense. At the same time, given the favourable opportunity, and such often occur, it is suggested that the advantages following it, in the case of the boy under discussion, are far beyond those of a University course. The mind much sooner loses rawness and immature or priggish views, while insular prejudices are rubbed off and a respect acquired for other nations; besides which a vast amount

of information, beyond the mere knowledge of other languages, is both rapidly and practically acquired. Above all, in your boy's case, a thoughtfulness and self-reliance result, which are the foundations of character, and therefore aid the future business man in putting his best self into his calling and his later life.

This by the way. It needs no saying that this paper is not directed against a University course except in certain cases, cases which become more and more numerous as the life at a University becomes more within the reach of the middle classes. What University training may be and is to those fitted to benefit from it is a widely different question and one which needs no words here!

The views here expressed, which have no doubt occurred to many more, are the result of observation, by a University man, of life at the Universities, and of many young men trained at a University—or rather brought through a University course—as well as of many trained in the way suggested here, and of their later histories. It must be repeated, in conclusion, that they relate to one class only, but a very large one of our English boys, and most parents would be able, probably alone, certainly with the aid of their boy's schoolmaster and of some intelligent man of the world, to decide whether their own boy comes within it. If he does, treat him on the facts, and, if you are not *sure* that a University course, for him, means anything more than following a fashionable custom, beware of giving so solid a part of his best and keenest years to it.

The other side of the question, whether the old Universities should provide more and more facilities for such as "Tom" to enter them, must almost inevitably arise out of the controversy already alluded to. In any case it is far too wide to enter upon here.